

More about upcoming 2023 issues, action opportunities, and meet-ups in West Hartford

Electric lawn care equipment – The West Hartford Conservation and Environment Commission is starting work on an education and awareness program about switching to electric lawn care equipment education program with the **goal** of reducing the use of gas-powered equipment and the air and noise pollution and greenhouse gas effects caused by that equipment. What can you do to support this:

1. Attend the commission meetings (January 23, February 27, March 27) and provide public comment to support this program and what it should look like.
2. Write a letter to the editor of We-Ha News calling attention to the problems of gas-powered equipment (pollution, noise, greenhouse gas) and the need to electrify lawn care and landscaping in WH.
3. Send email messages to members of Town Council advocating for the town to go electric for municipal landscape maintenance. WH has one riding and one walk-behind electric mower, we want to encourage it to replace all the gas-powered equipment. Find council members' email addresses in their profiles at:
<https://www.westhartfordct.gov/government-services/town-council>.

Reduce the need for mowing and blowing – The Conservation and Environment Commission is also starting work on a plan to convert some town grassy areas to native trees, bushes, and flowers; think “not used for sports or leisure and grass exists only to be mowed.” This action is anticipated to coordinate with existing pollinator pathways groups in West Hartford. What can you do to support this:

1. Attend the commission meetings (January 23, February 27, March 27) and provide public comment in support of this effort.
2. Write a letter to the editor of We-Ha News calling attention to these actions to reduce the need to mow and to cultivate plants that improve the soil, provide food and shelter to beneficial species, and remove more carbon from the air than turf grass.
3. Plan to volunteer to help if there are planting days.
4. Send email messages to members of Town Council advocating for these solutions. See note above about email addresses.

Library video contest: As part of our efforts to encourage the town operations, businesses, and residents to switch from gas- to electric-powered lawn care equipment, Sam Dynowski and Chris Feely proposed and helped plan an education and awareness video contest for students in grades 6 – 12 (Green Your Yard, Clear the Air!

<https://www.westhartfordlibrary.org/teens/mayors-youth-council/>). **Action opportunity:** Encourage family members, neighbors, etc., who are in 6th to 12th grades (WH residents or attend WH schools) to participate in the contest.

Solar canopies – People's Action for Clean Energy (PACE) has identified 63 locations in WH that are suitable for a solar canopy

(<https://pacecleanenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PACE-Solar-Canopies-Report-June-2021-Draft.pdf>). PACE estimates that West Hartford can provide 78.9% of its current energy use with a combination of solar canopies and rooftop solar. Solar canopies also reduce heat islands in paved areas. West Hartford has not yet started planning for solar canopies on municipal properties such as Town Hall and school parking lots and needs advocacy to start this big undertaking. *What can you do to support this:*

1. Attend Clean Energy Commission meetings (expected dates: January 23, February 27, March 27, April 24) and advocate for solar canopies.
2. Send email messages to members of Town Council advocating for solar canopies. See note above about email addresses.

West Hartford Climate & Environment Happenings. We're planning opportunities to meet-up, share updates, and take actions on the following dates. [See our calendar](#) for more details.

- February 12 at Westmoor Park - 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. Come learn the latest about climate and environment issues in West Hartford including pollinator pathways, solar canopies, electric lawncare, bikes and vehicles, and more. You'll hear about the issues, meet others, and find out opportunities for action! A walk around Westmoor Park will follow the conversation.
- March 15 at the Noah Webster Library - 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. (Noah Webster is open until 8 p.m. Mon - Wed.)
- April 16 - E-Bike event. More details coming soon.
- May 17 - 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. More details coming soon.
- June 11 at the Pollinator Garden on the Trout Brook Trail (corner of Boulevard and Trout Brook Drive) - 11 am - 1 pm - Join us for a conversation about pollinator pathways and a walk on the Trout Brook Trail. Bring a bagged lunch and picnic blanket.
- September 24 - 10 - 1 pm - Electric Showcase. In conjunction with National Drive Electric Week we'll host an event showcasing electric vehicles, electric bikes, electric lawn equipment and more! More details coming soon.